

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) A device for protection against voltage surges in an electric power supply line, comprising:

a Zener diode lightning arrestor that irreversibly short circuits to substantially zero volts and thereafter carries a discharge current that is substantially higher than before short circuiting, and

a varistor whose voltage-current curve is below a corresponding voltage-current curve of said arrestor until a certain current is reached at which the voltage-current curve of said varistor is above the voltage-current curve of said arrestor causing said arrestor to irreversibly short circuit, said certain current being greater than a current at which said arrestor would short circuit if said varistor were not present and,

the arrestor and varistor having respective connection terminals that are common and arranged in parallel, one of the connection terminals being connected to a line to be protected and the other connection terminal being connected to one of earth and a common conductor element.

5. (currently amended) The device according to Claim 4, further comprising an envelope of substantially cylindrical shape having two ends that are metal rings insulated from one another constituting said connection terminals and wherein the Zener diode lightning arrester is arranged along a longitudinal axis of the cylindrical envelope.

6. (currently amended) The device according to Claim 4, further comprising an envelope of substantially cylindrical shape having two ends that are metal rings insulated from one another constituting said connection terminals and wherein the varistor has the shape of a tube which is disposed around the Zener diode lightning arrester so that a longitudinal axis of the tube merges with the longitudinal axis of the cylindrical envelope.

7. (previously presented) The device according to Claim 6, wherein inner and outer surfaces of the varistor are respectively in contact with an inner metal tube and an outer metal tube which form electrodes of the varistor and which are respectively in contact with the metal rings.

8. (currently amended) A device for protection against voltage surges in an electric power supply line, comprising:

a Zener diode lightning arrester that irreversibly short circuits to substantially zero volts and thereafter carries a discharge current that is substantially higher than before short circuiting;

a varistor whose voltage-current curve is below a corresponding voltage-current curve of said arrestor until a certain current is reached at which the voltage-current curve of said varistor is above the voltage-current curve of said arrestor causing said arrestor to irreversibly short circuit, said certain current being greater than a current at which said arrestor would short circuit if said varistor were not present;

the arrestor and varistor having respective connection terminals that are common and arranged in parallel, one of the connection terminals being connected to a line to be protected and the other connection terminal being connected to one of earth and a common conductor element; and

an envelope of substantially cylindrical shape having two ends that are metal rings insulated from one another constituting said connection terminals, wherein the varistor has the shape of a tube which is disposed around the Zener diode lightning arrester so that a longitudinal axis of the tube merges with the longitudinal axis of the cylindrical envelope,

wherein inner and outer surfaces of the varistor are respectively in contact with an inner metal tube and an outer metal tube which form electrodes of the varistor and which are respectively in contact with the metal rings, and

~~The device according to Claim 7,~~ wherein a connection between one of the metal rings and the outer tube is ensured by welding spots whose volume and number are such that they are

adapted to melt under the effect of a voltage surge so as to perform a function of a disconnecter.

9. (previously presented) The device according to Claim 7, wherein a space inside said inner tube is filled with an insulating and resistant product.

10-13. (canceled)

14. (previously presented) The device of claim 4, further comprising an envelope of substantially cylindrical shape having two ends that are metal rings insulated from one another constituting said connection terminals.

15. (new) The device of claim 4, wherein the Zener diode is arranged to be operative after the varistor is disconnected.